

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: March 2, 2021
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Others present via zoom: Marj Wexler, Mary McGurn, Rolfe Tessem, Brian Shaw, Patrick Riordan, Laura Allen, Jeff Lazarus, Susan Bachelder, Eileen Vining, Chuck Ogden, Bill Hathaway, Rebecca Turner, Dennis Hogan, Fred Gordan, Will Brinker.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

Jeff Lazarus announced that a milestone is being reached in that Fiber Connect and MBI are ready to sign the agreement once the Board has signed the operations agreement and the coverage requirements resolution. The Board is certifying to MBI that there are 852 residents that the fiber will pass, 767 currently and 94 additional with the balance of the build out, minus Whites Hill which is being services by Alford's broadband. Egremont will have 100% coverage as promised by the Board. History is being made after a long and winding road. The Board voted unanimously to sign the resolution. The Board signed the agreement in December.

The review and possible award of the grant administration contract for the CDBG grant was postponed to March 9.

Patrick Riordan reported for the Town Hall Campus Development Working Group that they will not be moving forward with any actions for the May Town Meeting. The group is proposing to send a letter to the key users of Town Hall and the surrounding buildings and properties additionally, they will present a list of questions to determine needs and issues, both indoor and outdoor. The need for public input was discussed and may take place later. The Board approved the letter and the questions with the addition of safety issues.

Bill Hathaway presented a proposal for additional funding for the Southern Berkshire Ambulance. The Town funded the service in FY 21 and was planning to fund in the amount of \$16,135 for FY 22. The service is running a deficit of \$268,000. Services have increased during COVID while insurance payments have not. Reactions from the others town that use the service have been mixed, but all agree that a regional solution, involving state and federal officials, needs to be considered for a long term resolution. Mr. Hathaway and Dennis Hogan presented two options for a new assessment - one based on each town's Equalized Value and one based on each town's population ranging from \$29,704 to \$32,483. The Board voted to place a budget item of \$25,000 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant and urged formation of a regional work group as soon as possible.

The updated estimates for repairs to the Library building is \$331,700. The town's MPPF grant being application awards 50% of the costs and has a maximum award of \$100,000. The architect feels it is unlikely the Town will get \$100,000 as the total program is only funded at \$800,000. The Architect will be asked to break out any costs that are essential and the Board will review this again at is March 9

meeting.

Will Brinker, Water Department clerk, presented the Water Department's revised budget request. The Department is seeking a \$2.19 per hour wage increase for the Operator and is adding \$750 to pay for alarm responses. Revenues are generating \$20,300 per month and it is felt that will continue after the pandemic. Projected revenues for the year are \$230,000, still leaving a deficit of \$7,763 that the Town will have to subsidize. The Board approved the following line item budgets, pending final wage review:

Utilities	\$10,000
Audit	\$4,000
Office Expenses	\$1,600
Water Expenses	\$25,000
Line Repairs	\$37,500
Insurance	\$8,400
Software	\$2,100
Debt	\$91,350

Brian Shaw sought the Board's support on changing the retirees insurance benefits from a split of 50/50 to a split of 75/25 to match the current benefit split for active employees. The cost to the town is about \$14,000. This was attempted at town meeting last year. The Finance Committee has done some projections as to future costs which they will share with the Board. Selectboard member Brazie is recused from this issue. The Board was disinclined to move forward.

The Board voted to appoint a Transportation Committee to plan for the operation and expenses of the Van that the Town will receive in September. Peg Muskrat, George McGurn and Laura Allen were appointed. It was suggested that a person who uses the current Taxi system be added to the membership. The Committee will establish a budget and develop a plan describing users, types of rides, distance to travel, etc, as well as look at forming an agreement with the Town's of Alford and Mount Washington to utilize the service.

MassDOT has agreed to pay for the design and installation of a lighting system along Route 23/41 in the village of South Egremont. The Town is extremely appreciative and thankful for this offer. The Board will need to approve the fixture and the locations.

Chairman McGurn disappeared from the zoom meeting.

Vice-Chair Vermeulen asked that the Forest Management Plan be added to the next meeting agenda. She also noted that the Conservation Commission is extremely happy with their new clerk.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

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The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.